

Thoughts on Using an Executive Functioning Lens to Improve Family Stability and Economic Mobility Outcomes

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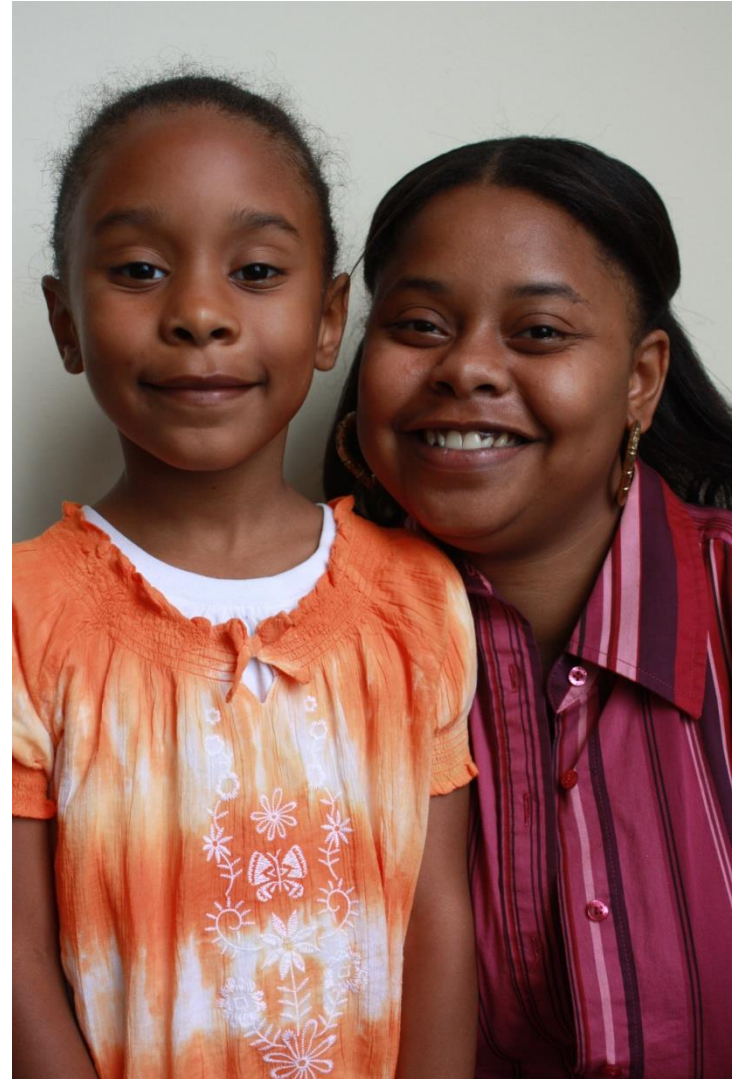


What is CWU?

An innovative Boston-based action tank delivering:

- programs
- applied research
- public policy

designed to help very low-income women and families reach economic independence.



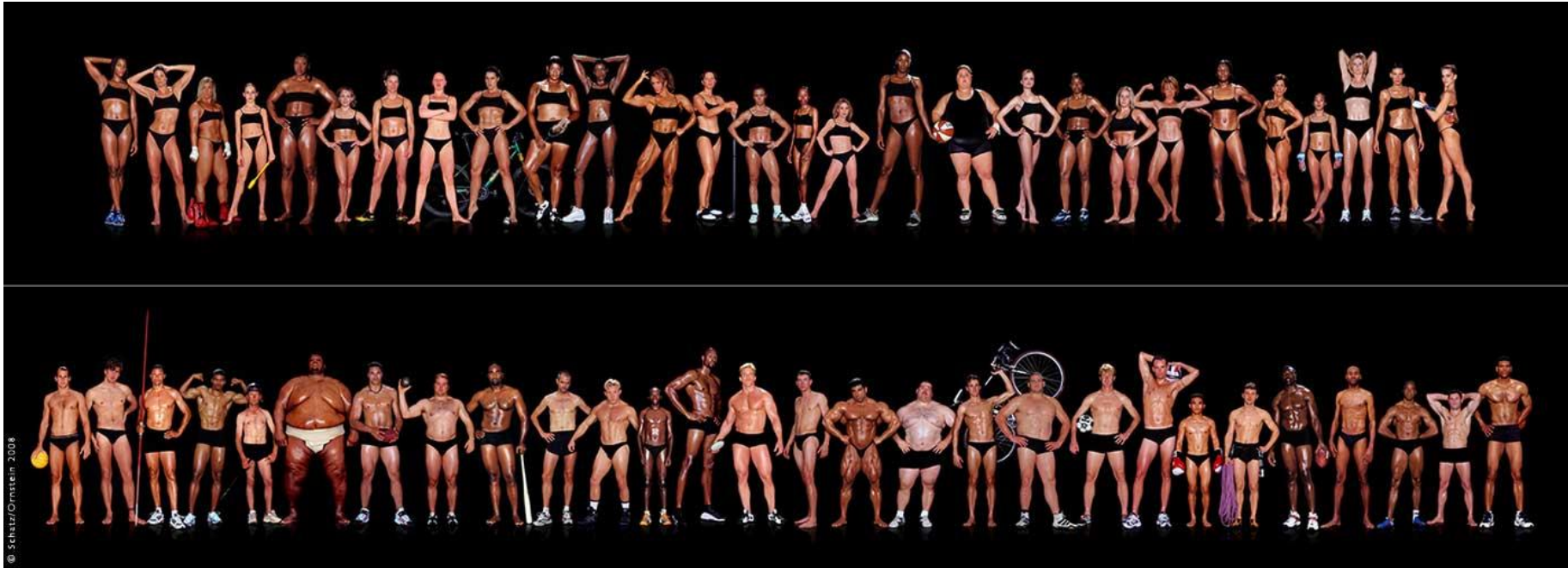
Brief Description of CWU Clients

- 1,400 individuals served/year
- 78% have HS education or less
- Avg. family earnings at program start is \$592/mo.
- 96% of families headed by a single parent
- Race/ethnicity: 48% Black, 20% Caucasian, 32% Latina



Science Shows Us that Human Beings Are Amazingly Adaptive

Who We Become Is a Result of Our Genes,
and Our Environment Too



Who We Become Is a Result of Our Genes, and Our Environment Too

If we grow up
experiencing life as
filled with many
opportunities, we
become experienced at:

- making plans
- looking for the best choices.....
- weighing our options....
- investing in ourselves for the future.....



Who We Become Is a Result of Our Genes, and Our Environment Too

If we grow up experiencing life as a series of crises, where new problems wait for us around every corner, we become experienced at:

- reacting....
- focusing on battling our immediate problems....
- trying to follow what people say we have to do to qualify for what we need....
- never planning too far ahead.....



From Childhood to Adulthood, Our Brains Grow New Neural Connections

The more we “exercise” our brains to do something, the better we become at it.

People with predictable and rich environments are more likely to build strong “executive functioning skills”:

- Pausing to think about what they really want before they react to something;
- Searching for and finding options and alternative courses of action before taking steps;
- Organizing and juggling complex tasks;
- Working to achieve goals over long time-frames.



CWU Families Have Experienced Significant Poverty and Trauma



- Approx. **75%** are currently homeless or have recent history of homelessness;
- **40%** report a major MH diagnosis;
- **43%** report a history of abuse, violence, and/or trauma;
- **35%** report a physical, cognitive, and/or MH disability that serves as a barrier to work or school;
- **50%** have a least one child with diagnosed special needs.

CWU's Mobility Mentoring™ Framework Helps Create “Agency” and Build EF Skills

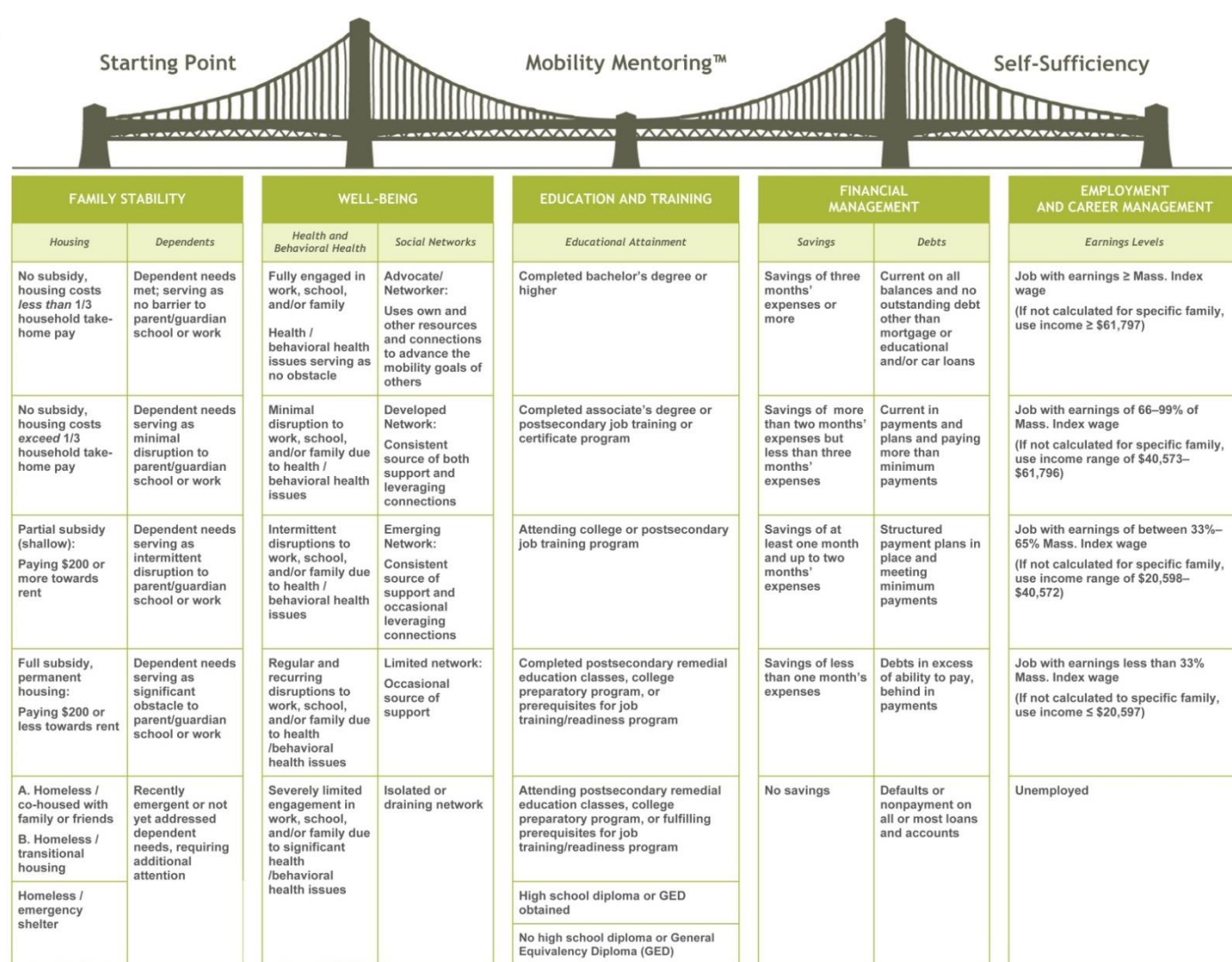


Fundamental Components of Mobility Mentoring:

1. Bridge to Self-Sufficiency™ scaffolding
2. Clear goal-setting and outcomes measurement
3. Tangible rewards
4. EF skill-building coaching
5. Peer support and leveraging social networks

Bridge to Self-Sufficiency: Mobility Mentoring and EF Framework

Future-oriented Decision-making



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Contextualized Decision-making

Mobility Mentoring Levels of Engagement

- Level One- (Drop-in/Light Engagement)
 - Sites- Mentoring Centers, Shelters, Non-mentoring Programs
 - 1-2 goals; usually < 6 months to achieve
- Level Two- (Intermediate)
 - Sites- Mentoring Centers, Supported Housing
 - 2+ goals; usually 6+ months to achieve
- Level Three- (Deep Engagement)
 - Multi-year mobility programs with application process
 - Simultaneous goals setting in all areas of Bridge; multi-year to achieve



Mobility Mentoring™ Framework:

Clear goal-setting and outcomes measurement

Mobility Mentoring Levels	Short-term Goals- (<u>≤</u> 6 months)	Intermediate Goals -(One-year)	Long-term Goals- (Multi-year)
Level Three (Multi-year programs- CFO)	Apply for financial aid; take entrance exams	Complete a year of college- 5 classes (B avg.)	\$50,000/yr. job and \$10,000 saved
Level Two (Drop-in Mentoring Centers and Supported Housing)	Identify smart start job; obtain credit report	Develop balanced budget and adhere for one year; start job-training	Exit into perm. housing with “smart start” (\$30K) job and 3 months’ savings
Level One (Drop-in Mentoring Centers and Shelters)	Begin housing applications; obtain credit report; enroll in financial mgt.	Develop balanced budget; save \$200 or reduce debt; obtain job or enroll in school	Exit into perm. housing with budget, savings, and next Bridge goals

Using EF Science to Inform Program and Policy Design

Key EF Elements	Recommended Approaches to Improve Program Design	Mobility Mentoring Design
Program Access and Persistence	↓ Barriers to Entry	Low-threshold, drop-in, program embedded access
	↓ Barriers to Maintaining Eligibility (Recertification)	Client-directed engagement/eligibility (“co-investment”)
	↓ Program Silos	Bridge (B\$\$) is inherently “silo-busting”
	Combine Funding Streams	Melded funding streams
Personal Agency	Foster Agency	Motivational Interviewing
	Client-directed goal-setting	B\$\$ and MM are entirely client-directed platforms
	Resources scaled to client investment (key-over time)	“Co-investment” rewards increased agency
	Frameworks for client leadership and advocacy	Client directed groups, events, advocacy, and networks

Key EF Elements	Recommended Approaches to Improve Program Design	Mobility Mentoring Design
Scaffolding/ Rules/Tools	Clear and consistent program requirements/expectations	Assessments, expectations, updates all provided to clients
	Provide in writing and multi-media	All done in writing and with visuals (B\$\$)
	Clear outcomes expectations and +/- ramifications	Plans/Contracts in writing (expectations for mentor and mentee)
Goals Frameworks	SMART Goals	SMART Goals deployed
With Scaled Rewards	Clear and Frequent Goals Evaluation	Evaluation done at intervals of 6 months or less
	Clear and Frequent Goals Rewards	Codified Incentives; Incentives multi-faceted
	Outcomes aligned accountability- org./prog./mentor/mentee	Mirrored accountability outcomes tracking

	Key EF Elements	Recommended Approaches to Improve Program Design	Mobility Mentoring Design
	Building Client EF Strategic Decision-making	Create opportunities to surface/array/evaluate options (key-elements choice/ramifications)	B\$\$ supports contextualized decision-making/choice/evaluation relative to ramifications
		Reinforce process of pause/reflection; testing decisions against agency	This and above done first with scaffolding and reinforced with coaching
		Promoting Resilience (“plan B” frameworks against abandonment)	“Plan B” assessments and goal-setting; Coaching for resilience/persistence
	Building Social Skills and Networks	Client-directed social rules building	Client-directed rules for meetings, social networking, and communications
		Client-directed programming/leadership	Client-directed content for and leadership of meetings, projects, events
		Promotion of client advocacy for self and others	Client advocacy (children, volunteering, pub .pol.)
		Promotion of social networking	Client social support and leveraging network goals



Mobility Mentoring™ Outcomes Achieved in Short-term (Level 1 & 2) Programs (FY'13)

- **60% of Level One** Mobility Mentoring Participants, were in school and/or working within 6 months of “Bridging”
- **71% of Level One** homeless housing guests had budgets and opened savings accounts (national comparison= 26%)
- **100% of Level One** formerly homeless families retained their post-exit housing for ≥ 18 months
- **25-30% of Level One** participants who had not been working or going to school started new jobs or enrolled in education
- **100% of Level 2** supported housing, high-risk families had no rent arrearages and had saved 2 month's rent or reduced debts by equal amount.
- **100% of Level 2** supported housing residents were employed or going to school
- **18% of Level 2** supported housing residents graduated from an education program



Outcomes Achieved in CFO (Level 3) Program 2012-2013

CFO Program Outcomes	Status at Program Start	Current Status (average participant tenure of 2.5 years)	Benchmark Comparisons
Educational Attainment	12.8 years	83% AA Degree or equivalent credits 27% BA or Higher	Avg. graduation rates for AA enrollees in Boston = 10%
Average Hourly Earnings	\$14.51/hour	\$19.72/hour (36% increase) 20% of CFOs have attained goal job (\$45-50K/year)	Female single parents' median earnings in MA = \$27,315/year (\$13.13/hr.) <30% of MA female-headed household earn more than \$45,000/yr.
Avg. Personal (unmatched) IDA Savings	\$0	\$1,529/household	Average total financial assets of MA very low income families = \$482
Home Ownership	0	10% of CFOs have purchased their own homes (10% more in early stages)	Nationally, less than 5% of all home owners are young unmarried women.

CFO Outcomes 2012-13



- 66 child-related goals achieved (e.g. school learning plans) in FY'12;
- Statistically significant improvements in Ferrans and Powers wellbeing scores;
- > \$67,270+ combined personal savings (not including match).
- Positive trending ROI.

Questions?

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